

MEMORANDUM FOR:

7 March 1951

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SUBJECT: Minutes of the Third Meeting of the CIA Transliteration Committee

1. The third meeting of the CIA Transliteration Committee was held at 1000, 2 March 1951 in Room 2219 "M" Building.

2. After a brief review of the decisions of the previous meeting and developments in the interval, the report of the Working Committee on Non-ideographic Far Eastern language was presented by [redacted]. His report included recommended transliteration systems for Annamese, Siamese and Burmese. He indicated that a good deal more study would be required before standard tables for Mongolian and Tibetan could be drawn up. It was agreed by the Committee that this report should be accepted as the final report of the Committee and that the Committee should be dissolved, subject to reinstatement at a later date, if necessary, when the question of Mongolian and Tibetan would be subject to clarification. Copies of the report of this Working Committee were placed in the hands of committee representatives so that they might discuss these with their respective offices.

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3. Following this, the report of the Working Committee on Near Eastern languages was presented by [redacted]. The report presented recommended standard transliteration tables for Arabic, Persian, Armenian, Hebrew, Urdu, Hindi, Turki, Old Turkish (Osmanli) and Greek. [redacted] indicated that further work was underway for the other Central Asiatic languages. In discussion of the report there was general agreement that the Committee should seek the establishment of uniform transliteration tables for those main languages which constituted a problem for the various offices. On this basis Old Turkish (Turkish written in Arabic script as used prior to 1926) and Turki (a minor language used in the Kashgar area) were discarded from consideration at this time by the Committee. It was further agreed that these two and other rare languages of Central Asia would be held in abeyance until a problem presented itself within the Agency in connection therewith. As a result of this agreement the report of the subcommittee was accepted as final and the Working Committee dissolved. Copies of the report of the Working Committee were given to each of the representatives for study and discussion with personnel in their respective offices.

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4. [] then presented the recommendation of the Working Committee on European languages. Recommendation was to the effect that the remaining European languages, for which there was not already a standard transliteration table, used the Latin alphabet, and, except for diacritical marks, presented no problem in transliteration. As the Committee had generally agreed previously that there could be no requirement to use diacritical marks due to involvement of machine operations, it was recommended that present procedures should be continued in using the spelling of the original language with or without diacritical marks, as expedient. This was accepted by the Committee as a final report and the subcommittee dissolved. In connection with this, however, [] proposed that it would be important for the Committee to agree on the use of "ae, oe and ue" for the corresponding umlauts in German names. She indicated that this is the present practice in BR. This proposal was submitted to the members for study and discussion at the next meeting. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday, 26 March at 1500 in order to allow time for the Committee members to study the recommendations submitted.

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5. On this note the third meeting was adjourned at 1130, 2 March 1951.

s/
J. J. BAGNALL
Chairman
CIA Transliteration Committee

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MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE CIA TRANSLITERATION COMMITTEE


PERSONS:

Mr. James MacFarthy, IASAS

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The second meeting of the CIA Transliteration Committee was held in Room 1276 "G" Building at 1449, 31 May 1949.

 Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Committee on Transliteration of Chinese, Japanese and Korean presented the findings and final recommendations of this committee on this subject. These were as follows:

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a. That the IAS Agencies adopt the Board of Geographic Names (BGN) transliteration system for all transliteration purposes in the Chinese, Japanese and Korean languages. This would mean, in effect, the Wade-Giles system for Chinese, the Hepburn system for Japanese and the McCune-Reischauer system for Korean.

b. That commonly-used personal or place names be included in the BGN system as exceptions, and shown within appropriate parentheses.

c. That recommendations for changes to the BGN system be made to BGN by the IAS Agencies, when and if circumstances warrant consideration of such changes.

d. That an IAS Committee be formed to determine aids, guides and handbooks that should be compiled for the use and application of the systems, and to recommend responsibility within the IAS Agencies for compiling them.

e. That the IAS Agencies consider the desirability of recommending to the Congress that the BGN system be extended for all Chinese, Japanese and Korean language transliteration purposes with a view to making it incumbent upon all Federal agencies to use the BGN system.

After a short discussion of the inherent difficulty in the McCune-Reischauer system of the use of diacritical marks with two letters, recommendations a. and b. above were unanimously approved by the Committee.

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Further discussion on the remaining points revealed:

a. That each of the IAS and CIA has representation on the BGN. Accordingly recommendation c. above can be carried out at any time under existing arrangements through these representatives. [redacted] Chief, Map Branch, GSN is the CIA representative.

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b. That the proposal contained in d. above may lead to a feeling of rival organization to BGN, and might develop far more slowly than the purpose of this Committee would allow. Further that a straight forward concise system should be adopted for use by all personnel, and that such a system should not require the development of aids, guides or handbooks for its application. This was countered with a need for a permanent working committee to determine and advise on the handling of exceptions. This point was finally laid aside for future consideration.

c. That point e. above was entirely outside the scope of the Committee, however, that future consideration might be given to recommending that the BGN be supported in any expansion of its activities so as to include rulings on use of transliteration systems per se, due to the very close connection between personal and place names.

[redacted] then presented the findings and final recommendations of the 44 Man Working Committee on Transliteration of Slavic languages. These were as follows:

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a. Adoption of BGN system of transliteration as standard for Russian.

b. BGN should be accepted as the authority for the transliteration of all languages for which it has prescribed a system.

c. BGN, therefore, should be followed for Bulgarian and Serbian.

d. Ukrainian and Belorussian, pending establishment of a system by BGN, should be transliterated in accordance with table presented herewith.

e. Further improvement in systems of transliteration should be sought, and appropriate recommendations made to BGN.

f. A permanent IAS committee should be established to work with BGN to this end, and to help effect general standardization extending to other departments of the government and learned institutions.

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g. There should be standardization of practice with regard to the transliteration of languages using the Roman alphabet, but including letters modified by diacritical marks. Action on this would be appropriate for the latter committee.

Recommendations a, c, d were unanimously approved by the Committee with the clarification that the BGN system for Serbian means the employment of the Croatian spelling.

Consideration of b. above showed general agreement with the principle, however, that approval should be withheld pending detailed study of the other languages. Recommendations e. and f. had already been discussed in connection with the report of the other Working Committee. No further discussion developed. The final recommendation was answered by the proposal for the establishment of a sub-committee to study this problem.

At this point it was indicated by the Chairman that the points above agreed to by the Committee would be written up for presentation to the Director for his approval as transliteration systems to be followed by all of CIA for the languages involved. This paper would, of course, be forwarded through the Assistant Directors for their concurrence. It was further agreed that IAC adoption of these points should be recommended as this would further facilitate the work of the intelligence agencies.

Finally, to accelerate the work of the Committee it was agreed to split the remaining languages to be studied into three groups:

- a. Non-ideographic Far Eastern languages (i.e., Siamese, Burmese, Mongolian, Tibetan, Annamese, Malay).
- b. Near-Eastern languages (Arabic, Turkish, Greek, Persian, Armenian, Urdu, Hindi, Turki, Bengali, Gujarati).
- c. European languages employing roman letters.

The following members were nominated to Ad Hoc Working Committees for study of the transliteration problems affecting these groups: [redacted] Chairman and [redacted] Member of the Working Committee on Transliteration of Non-ideographic Far Eastern languages; [redacted] Chairman, and [redacted] Member of the Working Committee on Transliteration of Near Eastern Languages; [redacted] Chairman, and [redacted] Member of the Working Committee on Orthography of European Languages (Roman alphabet). TO 52

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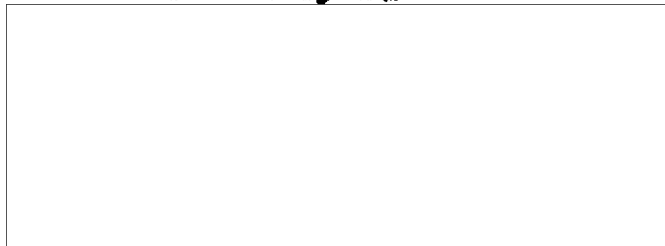
The Second Meeting of the CIA Transliteration Committee was adjourned, sine die, at 1235, 31 May 1949.

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26 May 1949

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. S. McCarthy, ICMB ✓
Mr. W. A. Tidwell, OEN



1. The CIA Transliteration Committee will hold its second meeting at 1600, 51 May 1949 in Room 1275 "G" Building.
2. The agenda for the meeting will include the following:
 - a. Presentation of recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Committee on Transliteration of Chinese, Japanese and Korean.
 - b. Presentation of recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Committee on Transliteration of Slavic Languages.
 - c. Appointment of new working committees.

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MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE CIA TRANSLITERATION COMMITTEE

PRESENT: Mr. Shane MacCarthy, ICAPS
Mr. W. A. Tidwell, P&P, ORE

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The first meeting of the CIA Transliteration Committee met in Room 1276, "A" Building at 1000, 29 December 1948.

In acting on the first point on the agenda, the Committee elected Mr. Bagnall as permanent Chairman.

The objectives of the Committee were then discussed. The Chairman indicated that initially it had been proposed that this Committee

(1) Determine the most acceptable system of transliteration for each language with a view toward the establishment of transliteration standards throughout the Agency, and

(2) Submit its recommendations to ICAPS for discussion with the IAC members in an endeavor to reach a more all-inclusive agreement on this subject.

In further discussion of ways and means of attaining these objectives a motion was made by [redacted] that sub-committees be formed to investigate more fully the problems of transliteration for each language and to come up with recommendations for consideration by the Committee. This move was seconded by Mr. MacCarthy and approved by the Committee. In further elaboration of the workings of the sub-committee, the Committee approved the following:

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- a. That the sub-committees be balled Ad Hoc Working Committees.
- b. That these Working Committees tentatively plan to include representatives of the IAC Agencies on the working level pending approval from Chief, ICAPS.
- c. That the Working Committees use the following criteria in their examination and selection of a transliteration system:

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- (1) Does the system represent the foreign languages adequately, consistently and without confusion.
- (2) Is it at present widely adopted.
- (3) Does it result in spellings close to those commonly used.
- (4) Can it be written on a standard typewriter or teletype and is it adaptable for IBM machines.
- (5) What provision for exceptions is made.

In discussion of the languages to be considered by working committees it was agreed to split all languages into two major categories: (1) Those employing other than the roman script, (2) Those employing the roman script. Priority consideration would be given to the first category. It was further agreed that the first category would be divided into four groups as follows:

- a. Slavic (Russian, Ukrainian, Serbian, Bulgarian)
- b. Ideographic (Korean, Chinese, Japanese)
- c. Arabic (Egyptian, Syrian, Persian, Urdu, Turki)
- d. Other languages

After discussion of priority needs it was decided that two working committees should be immediately established, one to examine the slavic group and another for the ideographic group. Priority consideration would be given by each committee to the languages in the order listed above for the group. The following members of the Committee were then elected to the Ad Hoc Working Committee on Transliteration of Slavic Languages--

[redacted] Chairman; [redacted] Members.
The following members of the Committee were elected to the Ad Hoc Working Committee on Transliteration of Korean, Chinese and Japanese-- [redacted] Chairman, and [redacted] Member.

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In conclusion, it was decided that target dates would not be assigned at this time to the Working Committees and that they should proceed immediately in the investigation of the problem assigned, with IAC representation upon receipt of approval from ICAPS.

The first meeting of the CIA Transliteration Committee then adjourned sine die at 1145, 29 December 1948.

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